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ABSTRACT

Two papers are presented concerning comparative higher education--one concerning its relevance for policymaking and the other reviewing a United States view. The first paper reviews comparative higher education in relation to studies of higher education, the use of comparative studies of higher education in policymaking, factors of relevance and obstacles to be overcome, and some research priorities as seen by policymakers. The second paper addresses the question: What non-U. S. trends, programs or developments in higher education would be of value to U. S. academics and policymakers and would justify a comparative approach to the study of higher education? Emphasis is placed on a number of areas where it can be demonstrated that foreign experience would be of current interest to U. S. higher education. These areas include: access to higher education, education-job link, techniques of educational planning, the professoriate, internal governance and management, and university-government relations. (NJM)

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Comparative Higher Education: Relevance for Policy Making

Ladislav Cerych

Comparative Higher Education: A United States View

George W. McGurn

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FOREWORD

With respect to comparative studies across national boundaries, it is both proper and necessary to ask: What can we really learn from the experiences of other countries?

Since educational problems and solutions are in large part the reflection of the distinctive societies that support them, comparisons that do not take full account of these differences can lead to dangerous error. And yet, that is not all that can be said, not by any means.

Knowledge knows no real national boundaries. The university, as its name implies, has universal characteristics. Increased mobility of faculty and students represents an important counterweight to parochialism. Members of many professional communities come from all parts of the world. All this suggests that similarities as well as differences must be kept in mind. And, therefore, we can, with due caution, learn from others.

Two colleagues at ICED were asked to think out loud on this subject. Ladislav Cerych is the European consultant and George McGurn is the research director in the New York office. They have written two interesting essays which are here published in an Occasional Paper of ICED. They wrote them to provoke comment. If comments are forthcoming ICED may sponsor a wider dialogue on the future of comparative studies. But read these first

James A. Perkins
Chairman
International Council for
Educational Development

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Comparative Higher Education: Relevance for Policy Making

Ladislav Cerych

I. STUDIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The study of higher education is a field which developed during the past decade at an exceptional rate. Judging by the number of publications, of research centers and of individuals devoted more or less exclusively to analysis and discussion of various aspects of higher education, this expansion is without any parallel in the past.

Lewis B. Mayhew's survey of the literature of higher education lists some 160 titles for the United States, for 1971 alone.¹ A small publishing house created in 1967 brought on the market within about four years some 60 books on American higher education. More than 50 American universities and colleges now have special departments or sections devoted to research and teaching of higher education, and award degrees in this field. The 1972 annual conference of the American Association for Higher Education was attended by 3,000 participants. And there are now in the United States about 6 monthly or quarterly journals and one weekly entirely devoted to the study and discussion of issues in higher education.

The development in Europe is less spectacular, but here too the field is growing rapidly. A major weekly dealing with

¹ Lewis B. Mayhew, *The Literature of Higher Education*, 1971, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1971.

higher education problems has appeared in Britain since the fall of 1971 (in addition to two or three journals). Several universities, both in that country and on the Continent, have created research centers or units for higher education studies and a number of ministries of education have set up more or less permanent bodies for that purpose.

Whether all these developments imply a birth of a new discipline distinct from the broader field of overall education and from other social sciences remains to be seen. In many ways the facts and figures mentioned constitute indicators which can be associated with the emergence of "a discipline in its own right" and which in the past accompanied the birth of many social and human or even natural sciences. An even stronger indicator might be the emergence of a special vocabulary and research patterns or questions not common to other fields. On the other hand, it might be argued that the study of higher education is and should be, by essence, interdisciplinary because it is problem- or issue-oriented. This means that the real breakthroughs and extension of knowledge in this field can come about only by making established disciplines such as economics, sociology or social psychology, with their rigorous conceptual and methodological apparatus, bear on the selected problem areas in higher education (which, in fact, constitute also an enrichment and advancement of these established disciplines).

Comparative studies in higher education: extension of a traditional approach or a new dimension?

Conceptually at least, a comparative approach to the study of higher education is in no way new. It draws both on comparative education and on comparative studies in general as they developed in various other social sciences.

As far as the first source is concerned, the list of authors whose work is without any doubt of greatest relevance, both

from the substantive and methodological points of view, can be traced far back into the nineteenth century: Marc-Antoine Jullien, Victor Cousin, Horace Mann, William T. Harris, are just a few names of the early period of comparative education. Michael Sadler, Wilhelm Dilthey, P. E. Levasseur, belong to the later generation which opened the way to the more recent work of Isaac Kandel, Nicholas Hans, Pedro Rossello, Robert Ulich, George Bereday, Torsten Husén, and others. Finally, the most contemporary work of Harold J. Noah, Max A. Eckstein, Philip Foster, C. Arnold Anderson, and other authors connected with the *Comparative Education Review*, constitute a bridge between the old discipline of comparative education and those who approached various problems of education from the point of view of their respective social sciences: Friedrich Edding, John Vaizey, Edward F. Denison, Theodore Schultz, Frederick Harbison, among the economists; Burton R. Clark, Amitai Etzioni, S. N. Eisenstadt, Joseph Ben-David, David McClelland, Martin Trow, Seymour Martin Lipset and A. H. Halsey, among the sociologists; Gabriel A. Almond and Robert O. Berdahl among the political scientists.

This impressive although very incomplete and only illustrative list of some of the main authors on which comparative studies in higher education can draw is not always matched by the nature of the literature and activities mentioned at the outset of this paper. Among the 160 titles in the Mayhew survey on the literature of higher education published in 1971 in the United States, none touches upon problems of higher education outside the United States; among some 85 topics discussed at the 1972 annual conference of the American Association for Higher Education, one only was concerned with an experience outside the United States; among several dozens of past and planned projects of the most important U. S. center for study in higher education,*

*Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, University of California, Berkeley.

none could be said to deal with comparative higher education; none of the U. S. journals concerned with studies of higher education devotes any significant part of its content to higher education abroad. However, interest in comparative higher education among U. S. academics and research institutions certainly exists and is growing. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education commissioned four volumes by foreign authors attempting to assess problems of U. S. higher education in a comparative perspective; a journal such as *Sociology of Education* regularly publishes papers with a comparative dimension; and a large number of scholars working in established disciplines are focusing attention on, or even specializing in, what can be termed "comparative higher education." It might be of significance that this new interest is often more visible among those names associated primarily with traditional departments- economics, sociology, social psychology, political science, etc.- rather than among "educators" and schools of education whose interests remain often purely nationally centered (with the exception, of course, of the "comparative educationalists" proper).

As far as Europe is concerned, interest in comparative higher education is decidedly increasing. The British weekly devoted to higher education** regularly publishes news on higher education issues abroad.² Since 1972, a journal*** based entirely on a cross-national view of higher education has been published in the Netherlands and some of the new university centers specializing in research (or even teaching) on higher education pay considerable attention to events and developments in other countries. Last but not least, the work

***The Times Higher Education Supplement*.

² However, some partial surveys on the opinions of readers of this weekly have shown that the international section is given a rather low priority.

****Higher Education*, Elsevier Scientific Publishing Company.

of different international organizations, both public and private, in comparative higher education currently represents a research effort of a scale and volume without any parallels in the past.

Meaning of comparative studies in higher education.

But what really is or should be understood when speaking of comparative studies in higher education? Is there something specific about it which, besides the subject matter, would differentiate this field from comparative education in general or from comparative studies in fields such as politics or sociology? These are more than rhetorical questions and a satisfactory answer to them cannot be provided in this paper which tries merely to indicate possible linkages between comparative studies and policy making in higher education. An effort is required similar to the one by Noah and Eckstein³ or to the Macridis book on comparative government,⁴ to Marsh's *Comparative Sociology*,⁵ or to a recent collection of essays on comparative methods in sociology⁶ so that a more coherent picture of the field can emerge. At this point only some preliminary remarks can be presented.

A comparative approach to studies of higher education should imply much more than a juxtaposition of descriptive (or even analytical) studies of higher education systems or of

³ Harold Noah and Max Eckstein, *Toward A Science of Comparative Education*, Macmillan: New York, 1969.

⁴ Roy C. Macridis, *The Study of Comparative Government*, New York: Random House, 1955.

⁵ Robert M. Marsh, *Comparative Sociology*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1967.

⁶ Ivan Vallier (editor), *Comparative Methods in Sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press 1971.

a particular aspect of these systems as appearing in different countries. This indeed seems to be by far the most frequent approach of research centers which entered the field in one form or another.⁷ The really comparative approach in education has been used much more widely with respect to the primary and secondary levels, as is clearly indicated by the content of the *Comparative Education Review* and of the "classics" in comparative education.

It is not quite clear why this should be so. To some it might seem that there is a much greater complexity of and substantially greater differences between higher education systems of various countries than is the case of lower levels of education, and that therefore higher education systems are more difficult to put in a comparative perspective than the other segments of the education system. But more probably the reason is historical: educational philosophers of the past centuries, and later social scientists of all disciplines, were concerned for obvious reasons with the educational process related to the largest elements of the population and to the fundamentals of the learning and teaching process, rather than to the part of the system affecting only a tiny minority of society. Their successors simply followed in this direction.

But the situation has changed radically in the course of the second half or last third of the twentieth century. Up to 40 percent of the age group are now enrolled in higher education institutions whose crucial role in economic and social development is now universally established and whose recent and protracted crisis or even disruption is most visible and politically most explosive almost everywhere. Clearly, the rapidly growing interest in comparative higher education has its strongest roots in this new situation.

⁷ See below, page 10 for some of the dangers of this approach in relation to policy making.

Undoubtedly much can be learned from the already existing work, even considering the still relatively small number of available studies and of researchers and research centers involved.

There are, on the one hand, what might be called "bilateral studies" which consist in a comparison and confrontation of two higher education systems only (the most frequent combination seems to be the United States and Britain).⁸ The advantage of this approach is that it allows a relatively profound analysis by a single author equally knowledgeable about the two systems concerned. Although not related to higher education, Tocqueville's study of the United States and France is an important model in this respect.⁹

For certain purposes, however, the bilateral approach might not be sufficient. For example, in most cases the author is not able to identify general trends or to define correlations or complex relationships between some of the key variables, such as degree of centralization and growth of the system or admission policies and student unrest, institutional autonomy and innovative capacity, etc. For such problems the two nation comparison is usually inadequate or might even be misleading.

The "pluri-national comparison" or the "multilateral approach" offers additional possibilities although it involves greater difficulties and other dangers. Its main protagonists are certainly international organizations, in particular OECD, UNESCO and the various inter-governmental or non-governmental bodies which it sponsors (International Institute for

⁸ The works of T. R. McConnell and Eric Ashby, for example.

⁹ Neil J. Smelser, "Alexis de Tocqueville as Comparative Analyst," *Comparative Methods in Sociology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971.

Educational Planning, International Bureau of Education, International Association of Universities) as well as the Council of Europe. To a great extent, these organizations have been pursuing or sponsoring multilateral comparative studies of higher education, not by design but by virtue of their constitutions and by nature of their programs, without having formally developed any specific conceptual model or framework for such studies. In many cases the pattern of their work still leads to a juxtaposition of national studies but in many instances important elements of a truly comparative approach can be identified: several national case studies are prepared according to a common research outline which facilitates a synthetic presentation; comparability of education statistics has been improved; international typologies and taxonomies related to higher education were developed and, probably most important, a problem-oriented approach became the most widely used method of comparative studies in higher education.

It seems that this approach is in many ways the only one which will allow comparative higher education to overcome its traditional weaknesses--more or less identical to those which Macridis attributed to the traditional approach in comparative government--namely to be essentially non-comparative, descriptive, parochial, static and monographic.¹⁰ The problem-oriented approach, of course, still requires an appropriate analytical scheme, i.e., the definition of categories of analysis (of problems or issues) which are sufficiently general to allow the inclusion of all systems of higher education in spite of their differences, but which at the same time bear on the main variables which determine the functioning of all systems and their relations with the socio-economic and political context. Or, to use the structuralist approach, "the comparative method becomes, not the comparison of types of societies or institutions (in our case

¹⁰ Macridis, *op. cit.*

higher education institutions or systems), but comparisons of logically deduced models: of logical relations freed of their cultural content rather than comparisons of empirical data."¹¹ But the comparative method must not only identify categories of analysis which are general enough to allow all systems of higher education to be included (thus not to be nationally or culturally bound); it must permit at the same time the analysis of variability. Clearly, this is the main methodological problem involved in comparative studies of all sorts, one of the first preconditions of which seems to be the development of a more general language and subsequently the tracing of variations within the broader categories of analysis.

It can be argued that comparative studies in higher education cannot and should not ever have a common methodology because the intervention of several disciplines, each of them with its own methodology, is needed. However, it is precisely this interdisciplinary nature of comparative higher education which postulates the establishment of a solid conceptual framework within which the comparative methodologies of different social sciences could cross-fertilize each other and thus contribute to a better understanding of the phenomenon of higher education.

Comparative studies of higher education can be seen as a part or extension of comparative education and of comparative studies in general; they can also be considered as an indispensable dimension and tool of the study of higher education. In both cases, they are of strategic importance to the actual process of policy formations as will be shown in the following section of this paper. That section should, it is hoped, also provide some additional elements for the

¹¹ W. Davenport, "Social Organisations," p. 216 quoted in Marsh, op. cit. p. 26.

definition of the appropriate content and method of comparative higher education.

II. THE USE OF COMPARATIVE STUDIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN POLICY MAKING

Most of the reasons justifying comparative studies in higher education from the point of view of the planner and policy maker are identical to those which brought into being the whole field of comparative education. They will be grouped under three categories: (1) borrowing; (2) generating political pressure; (3) better understanding of one's own system.

Borrowing

Noah and Eckstein^{1 2} consider educational borrowing as the main rationale of the second stage in the development of comparative education. For the policy maker and planner this rationale remains more or less powerful practically at any stage of history and in respect to higher education as much as with regard to other educational levels. Examples of the past are well known and do not need to be discussed here. As soon as the need for reform is felt sufficiently, the search for "foreign models" constitutes a natural tendency of almost any government and social group. And as the need for reform today is quasi-universal, to look at foreign solutions and experiences, considering both their achievements and failures, is a highly desirable approach which most of the politicians and planners have indeed followed, at least partly. Almost any of the recent major national reforms of higher education in Europe was preceded by missions to other countries to collect information on "how things were done elsewhere," and reports of these missions appeared as integral parts of

^{1 2} Harold Noah and Max Eckstein, *Toward a Science of Comparative Education*, op. cit.

reform proposals (e.g., a special international annex to the Robbins Report).¹³

Sometimes, of course, these "looks at foreign models" served only to legitimize the refusal of any non-national solution and of a "we know best" attitude, but during the past years a more rational approach developed in many countries. On several occasions the author has witnessed the keen desire of policy makers to embark upon reform only after studies of foreign patterns have been undertaken. And many if not most of the conferences, seminars and studies sponsored by international organizations are supported by member governments precisely for that reason.

Descriptions and analyses of foreign solutions, to be really useful in order to learn "what to do and what not to do," are effective only under certain conditions which by themselves would deserve a careful study. If undertaken by specialists of the foreign country, these descriptions and analyses will often put emphasis on points and problems highly relevant in the respective country, but of little importance for the potential borrower; moreover, they might omit to stress

because they take them for granted those aspects which from the point of view of the borrower could constitute the true originality of the solution or which are the conditions *sine qua non* of its functioning. If, on the contrary, the descriptions are done by nationals of the receiving country, they might represent a superficial retranslation of the foreign experience in national terms, thus missing the true dynamics of this experience. Ideally, only a person with perfect understanding of the two systems and of their historical and political context should be asked to present the foreign experience to national policy makers; in practice, at least, a

¹³ Committee on Higher Education (Robbins Committee). *Higher Education: Report of the Committee, Appendix 5: Higher Education in Other Countries*. London: HMSO, 1963.

certain number of basic rules should be followed which are precisely those of comparative higher education.

Creating political pressure

This aspect of the relevance of comparative studies in higher education is not widely, and certainly not officially, acknowledged, although it is far from negligible. The phenomenon can be observed in many other fields, both on the national level and on the level of institutions and social groups. When a comparative account of achievements and developments of all kinds is presented, even if its purpose is a purely academic or analytical one, such an account will often have a psychological impact on the countries, institutions or groups concerned. Thus, if a particular country appears in an international table comparing higher education enrollment ratios at the bottom of the list, while its GNP per capita ranks it rather high, this simple fact will ultimately contribute to create a pressure for policies facilitating the growth of enrollments.

A similar effect might be produced by a comparative table showing the proportions of students from lower income families in universities, by a table giving the amounts of public funds spent per student, or the percentage of GNP spent on higher education. In most cases, the first reaction of the country (or institution) concerned will be a rather negative one, either putting in doubt the data presented by the authors of the international comparison or, more often, criticizing them for not understanding or misinterpreting the respective national systems. However, provided that the information is backed by solid evidence and that the main principles of comparative studies have been followed, the more or less unfavorable international comparison will be taken up sooner or later by public opinion in particular the journals and the press as well as the planners and policy makers themselves. This will eventually either contribute to

the formulation of new policy measures or at least help in a better understanding of the factors which make the respective country appear "at the bottom of the international table." Many examples of this process could be quoted. Thus the comparative work of Friedrich Edding had undoubtedly great impact on policy making in Germany; several countries and curriculum planners were deeply disturbed by the findings of the International Study of Achievements in Mathematics and Sciences, and many of the comparative studies published by international organizations became important points of reference in the defining of national targets. The latter type of influence of comparative studies can be considered to reach beyond the mere creation of political pressures; in this sense, these studies become an important factor of the process of goal setting. Of course, no country will plan its future higher education enrollments solely to match a ratio reached elsewhere nor will it project the creation of institutions of a certain type because such institutions exist somewhere abroad. But certainly the mere existence of higher ratios or of particular institutions in other countries¹⁴ provides additional credibility and rationality to the national plan or projections, and thus greater chances of implementation.

The argument can be made that this process of goal setting by implicit or explicit reference to foreign achievements or situations, in the same way as borrowing of foreign solutions, has always been taking place and will continue to take place with or without comparative studies. However, if this is so, comparative studies are even more justified because they alone can contribute to the rationality of these processes, that is, to the elimination or attenuation of a process of goal

¹⁴ A very significant example in this respect is the British Open University which stimulated plans for the establishing of similar institutions in many other countries.

setting and selective borrowing based principally on more or less arbitrary fluctuations of different innovation trends, or even fashions.

Better understanding of one's own system

Even if policy makers and planners have no intention whatsoever of adopting or of adapting to foreign models, a comparative approach throws significant light on the really basic forces which foster or resist innovation and on the mechanisms which command and explain, beyond the purely national circumstances, the behavior and problems of almost any higher education system in the socio-economic context of the last third of the twentieth century.

This can be clearly, even if only indirectly, demonstrated by a number of examples drawn from the practical experience of the author.

Thus, a comparative study of two- or three-year non-university institutions of postsecondary education¹⁵ trying to provide terminal vocational education and/or the first years of university studies has shown that in almost all countries these institutions suffer from a lack of status which was usually considered to result from particular national or local circumstances. By isolating and controlling several variables, the comparative analysis demonstrated the existence of deeper factors and interrelationships which have to be influenced by policy measures if any more permanent change is to be achieved. The fact that, say, a British polytechnic encounters a number of almost identical problems as a U. S. community college, in spite of all the differences which separate these two types of institutions, was not only

¹⁵ OECD, *Short-Cycle Higher Education, A Search for Identity*, Paris, 1973.

intellectually revealing, it also pointed more clearly than any purely British or American study toward the leverage points where action could or should be taken.

Another example might be taken from the comparative study of enrollment growths in higher education. The conclusions of such a study¹⁶ demonstrate, among other things, that during the past 20 years there was practically no correlation between economic development and the rates of expansions of higher education, and that higher education systems generally responded very poorly, if at all, to policy measures tending to orient students toward types and fields of study which were presumed to correspond to priority areas of manpower needs. By purely national studies it would be very difficult to establish why the policy measures taken were inadequate and to unveil the complexity of the relationship between economic growth and the growth of higher education. A comparative analysis does, however, throw some light on these questions mainly because it permits one to isolate some strategic variables and to observe their impact.

Comparative studies are also highly relevant for determining the relative advantages and drawbacks of the three well-known methods of planning of higher education: the social demand approach, the manpower approach, and the cost-benefit approach, and of the conditions which make one or the other, or their particular combination, more or less effective and operational. National studies alone tend to attribute the good or poor results of each of these methods either to their purely methodological aspects or to specific political circumstances of the country concerned. In an international comparative perspective it becomes much

¹⁶ OECD, *Development of Higher Education 1950-1967, Analytical Report*, Paris, 1971.

clearer which factors and features of the higher education system constitute the real bottlenecks for the practical use of these methods.

To summarize the argument in favor of comparative studies as a tool for better understanding of one's own system, it could possibly be said that this tool is one of the very few which allows one to identify a certain number of strategic parameters and to test, at least partially, their behavior under different stresses, socio-economic and educational configurations, before costly and eventually inefficient policy measures are taken. Or, quoting Radcliffe-Brown: "It is only by the use of the comparative method that we can arrive at general explanations. The alternative is to confine ourselves to particularistic explanations similar to those of the historian. The two kinds of explanations are both legitimate and do not conflict; but both are needed for the understanding of societies and their institutions."¹⁷

III FACTORS OF RELEVANCE AND OBSTACLES TO BE OVERCOME

The main arguments against policy relevance of comparative studies in higher education are implied in several of the preceding considerations. The "we know best" attitude, the superficial descriptive approach, the mere translation into national terms of the foreign experience and, in general, comparing what is not comparable (e.g., a doctorate in one country with a doctorate in another) are some of the most obvious dangers of comparative studies in higher education as indeed of any comparative study.

¹⁷ A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *A Natural Science of Society*, New York: Free Press, 1957, pp. 113-14. Radcliffe-Brown does not, of course, refer to higher education specifically but to the comparative method in anthropology.

Most of their dangers are of a methodological nature and continuous theoretical work is necessary in order to eliminate them as much as possible. This work requires an effort not only of comparative educationalists, but of comparative social scientists of all disciplines; and it requires, probably more than anything else, the encounter between the traditional discipline specialists—economists, sociologists, psychologists on the one hand, and the problem specialists—the experts in higher education—on the other.

The “we know best” attitude is essentially of a psychological order and probably of greatest importance when discussing the relation between comparative studies in higher education and policy making. It takes several forms which might be illustrated by a number of common and frequently heard statements:

“Our system is so particular and different from all those abroad that no useful comparisons can be made.”

“Our system is so complex that putting it into any international comparison becomes meaningless.”

“Our system is so much related to our social (historic, cultural, economic, political) context that it cannot be compared in isolation from it (and thus cannot be compared at all).”

Clearly, a valid answer to these and similar arguments will depend on the existence of an appropriate methodology used in comparative studies of higher education. But it will also result from a more widespread acceptance of considerations formulated in the previous section of this paper. This, in other words, means to identify the main factors of relevance of comparative studies in higher education for policy making.

Four questions seem to point in the direction of the search for these factors:

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1. What are the types of comparative studies in higher education having more or less impact (or no impact at all) on policy formation?

2. What are the countries, institutions, and social groups more or less open to (or resisting) findings derived from comparative studies in higher education?

3. What are the situations economic, social, and political in which these findings seem to be more or less readily received?

4. At what points of the quantitative and qualitative development of the higher education system can more or less receptivity to comparative studies be noticed?

Only a few tentative answers to these questions, based mainly on personal impression, can at this point be offered.

1. Comparative studies must not be too abstract or general nor too specific, to be really considered by policy makers. The former might be disregarded as not practical enough; the latter might easily be taken as "not applying to our conditions." Studies concerning curriculum questions, planning methodologies or financing, have usually more policy impact than those dealing with structure and status of the teaching body, with admission criteria or governance of institutions.

2. Smaller countries are, as a rule, more receptive to comparative studies than bigger ones, but important exceptions to this rule (Japan, Germany) can be observed. There does not seem to be any particular kind or size of institution that is clearly open or clearly resistant to comparative studies. Among the main social groups involved in higher education, students often appear very interested in comparative studies.

3. In very general terms it can probably be said that "crisis situations" (e.g., a financial crisis) are associated with more extensive use of comparative studies. Violent crises, however, do not usually represent an appropriate climate in this connection.

4. Greater receptivity to comparative studies seems to occur at practically any stage of the quantitative and qualitative development of the system, and at all stages resistances to their use can be observed. These studies seem, however, to have a larger policy potential at certain breaking points, i.e., when the growth curve implies a change in the nature of the clientele and/or of the teaching content of the system (e.g., a passage from elitist to mass higher education or from an essentially academic and humanities-oriented system toward a more professionally and technically oriented one).

The tentative nature of all these statements is evident. They all need substantiation and can, at best, be considered as working hypotheses or elements of a possible research framework.

Such research, it is believed, could produce most significant results by showing the factors contributing to the development and use of comparative studies in higher education as well as some of the contextual obstacles in this respect. Interpretation of these research results might also provide important indications on the nature and methodology of comparative studies of particular relevance to policy making.

IV. SOME RESEARCH PRIORITIES AS SEEN BY POLICY MAKERS

Not all comparative studies in higher education are, of course, of direct and/or immediate relevance to policy

makers and planners. In certain cases such relevance will emerge only in the long run; in other instances the impact of comparative studies on policy making will remain always very indirect. In this respect comparative studies of higher education are in the same situation as research in any other field, and it would certainly not be a wise approach to try to determine the specific areas of study solely by the needs of policy makers. However, these needs do represent a valuable orientation, especially at the present stage of a scarcity of research funds.

An illustrative list of research areas, corresponding to a number of the issues for which planners and policy makers are seeking answers, follows. In practically all of the areas mentioned the comparative approach can help considerably both as an analytical tool and as a factor of innovation diffusion.¹⁸

1. Coordination and Comprehensive Planning of Higher Education

(Appropriate methodologies and institutional mechanisms of planning; planning and decision making; plans and their implementation; planning and institutional autonomy; planning for change. . .)

2. Non-Traditional Forms of Higher Education

(Open University, University Without Walls, work-study schemes, external degrees, and similar arrangements; their curricular implications particularly in connection with new concepts of credit units and a system of "recurrent education"; their cost and financing implications; their relations with traditional forms of study; consequences for access conditions and faculty recruitment. . .)

¹⁸ The numbering does not imply any order of priorities.

3. Access to Postsecondary Education and Equality of Opportunity

(Formal criteria and actual flows; stated policies and students' intentions and behavior; a system-wide view of the admission process; the problem of admission in a perspective of "recurrent education". . .)

4. Excellence in Mass Higher Education

(Role and place of research in mass higher education; "noble" and "less noble" segments of higher education; institutional hierarchies; correlates of excellence; international and interinstitutional cooperation or coordination as a factor of excellence. . .)

5. New Technologies in Higher Education

(Their impact; factors contributing to their effectiveness; resistances to their introduction; their cost implications. . .)

6. Cost and Financing of Higher Education

(New sources of financing; costs of alternative structures of higher education; different possible student support schemes; new trends concerning relations between local, state, and national (federal) financing; relations between institutional autonomy and particular sources of financing; accountability. . .)

7. Content and Relevance in Higher Education

(New approaches to curriculum structure and development; curriculum implications and basis of practically all points above. . .)

8. Institutional Research and Evaluation

(Its various forms and methodologies; its effective linkage with the planning and decision-making process; from institutional to system-wide research and evaluation. . .)

9. Other Topics

(Government of higher education institutions; institutional management; student participation; teachers in higher education. . .)

For most if not all these topics, one specific methodological consideration seems of particular importance when envisaging the issue of policy relevance of research in comparative higher education: the formal versus informal aspects of each of the problems. Only by dealing with both of them, i.e., with the manifest and latent relationships operating with respect to the different issues, can research become truly policy relevant. The main gap, it is suggested, is not between too theoretical research and practical politics but between research which disregards the hidden parameters of reform feasibility and research which does not; between research which takes into account the informal power structures, "the latent curriculum," the undeclared resistances and unintentional goals, and research which concentrates merely on the apparently rational factors of educational developments. The relatively new discipline of Policy Sciences and all the related literature on policy formation might represent a strategic contribution and open up new ways in this respect.¹⁹

¹⁹ See, for example the work of Yehezkel Dror and the most stimulating book by Guy Benveniste, *The Politics of Expertise*, Berkeley: The Glendessary Press, 1972.

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Comparative Higher Education: A United States View

George W. McGurn

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This paper addresses the following question: What non-U.S. trends, programs, or developments in higher education would be of value to U.S. academics and policy makers and would justify a comparative approach to the study of higher education?

The justification of comparative studies must lie in new insights to be gained from worldwide comparisons that show how different cultures work out distinctive answers to common problems. Since the approach tends to show the broad contours common to cross-cultural and transnational comparisons, the danger exists that comparative analysis becomes impressionistic or pretentious theory. This depends, like all other research, on the talent and expertise of the researchers. Development of comparative approaches of the past decade has seen the completion of Bereday's¹ suggested three stages of research development: (1) broad descriptive data; (2) social scientific interpretation; and (3) simultaneous reviews and juxtapositions.

The International Project for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA),² under the direction of Torsten

¹ George Z. F. Bereday, *Comparative Methods of Education*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

² The 68th Annual Yearbook, part 2, *Educational Evaluation: New Roles, New Means*, The National Society for the Study of Education: Chicago, Illinois.

Husen, has developed comparative analysis still further by testing hypotheses among national systems. Measures of cognitive and non-cognitive variables were related to comprehensive sets of input variables showing strong correlation between social class, educational performance and participation. Multivariate analysis provided useful insights into *how* educational outcomes are related to inputs. The IEA project indicates a trend toward a more rigorous, comparative approach to policy questions, and also suggests justification for comparative studies based on a current academic need of U. S. higher education.

Social science research has often been unrelated to policy concerns, too discipline-oriented or reductionist to be of use to policy makers concerned with the broader view. An explicit effort to incorporate comparative perspectives into social scientific analysis could help social science fill the void that Stephen K. Bailey¹ suggests it has created between a public philosophy and practical management hints. The reason for this is that a solid comparative perspective cannot look at policy decisions in one context and add them to the policy options of another without a clear understanding of the inner life of the systems being examined. Comparative studies must encompass the economic, cultural and social applications of policy and are at least one method of fostering a valid interdisciplinarity in the social sciences as a whole.

This also suggests that comparativists should keep firm hold on the first stage of the broad descriptive data (that Bereday suggested) as their analysis becomes more rigorous. Experience in the social sciences cautions about focusing on methods at the expense of posing insightful questions on

¹ Stephen K. Bailey, speech delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Council on Education, Washington, D. C., October 1973.

which to apply them. The problems precede the methods and they are always less dubious than the data.

At this stage, common frames of reference and taxonomies must be developed in the field of comparative higher education to permit transnational, cross-cultural analysis of specific problems. There will not, of course, be any neat transfer between the successful experiences of another culture and the specific needs of the United States. But there are common problems and the solutions to these problems, or the lessons of their failure, do have relevance to the United States. In a comparative perspective, higher education has two basic functions: (1) specific skill training for identifiable job markets; and (2) dissemination and advancement of the arts and sciences.

The first function points to a comparative perspective when industrialized societies are considered. Post World War II economic growth made increased educational expenditures feasible in industrialized countries. Higher education consistently grew most rapidly. The fear that underinvestment in education would hinder economic growth in a period of increased labor market complexity led to the worldwide increases in national education expenditures. These phenomena cut across economic and social systems. Yet a remarkable uniformity of objectives supported this expansion. The convergence of concern for the provision of skills required for economic growth assumes the ascendancy of technique, the rise of bureaucratic skill, and the influence of scientific and technical elites. In all industrialized countries, specific skill training for the requisite manpower has come to rely on higher education to an increasing extent. It does seem probable that a comparative perspective in higher education may indicate useful policies responding to the technological and skill requirements of a modern economy and job market. Perhaps most important, the questions raised are eminently researchable.

The cultural function of higher education can perhaps be used to argue against the relevance of comparative perspectives because national educational systems are so embedded in their own culture's symbols and intellectual agreements that they do not easily translate into another national context. This probably indicates why Edward Sheffield of the University of Toronto suggests that innovation in higher education can be imported by planners and academics who have knowledge of their own situation and understanding of the context of the proposed import. But such innovations cannot be readily exported. On the other hand, insights can be gained by juxtaposing the U. S. system of higher education against very diverse systems. It need not always search out similar problems or cultural affinities. For instance, while discussing the vocation of scholarship and science in Germany, Max Weber compared it to the American academic research career. He began, "In order to understand the distinctiveness of the German situation, it is useful to proceed comparatively and to picture to ourselves how the matter stands in the U. S. where the divergence from Germany in this respect is greatest."⁴

The problem-oriented aspect of comparative studies sometimes leads to the basic argument against their usefulness for policy or decision making. It is often said that policy relevance is improbable because any practical conclusions reached are dismissed: they may have worked someplace else because the conditions are different; attitudes are not applicable; traditions are not compatible. This could just as well be said of policy makers who attempt to implement any new ideas within a U. S. system. It is not uncommon for education officials in New York State to be told that ideas that work at the State University of New York cannot work

⁴ Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf*, Munich and Leipzig: Dunker and Humboldt, 1919, p. 3.

at the City University of New York. When the New York Board of Regents tried to introduce an external degree program, it was said: it might work in California, but it is not feasible in New York. These examples suggest that the impracticality of comparative studies is not the real problem but rather inertia, underlying fear of change, and lack of knowledge about the process of innovation-diffusion within educational systems.

In some cases, cross-cultural comparisons may be preferable since it is often easier to view policy considerations outside of the complexity of common social and economic systems shared by competing institutions. It is often difficult to consider transference of innovative solutions within a system of differentiated educational institutions when potential student and faculty flows among them can jeopardize their survival. Many of these complexities can be avoided by a common focus on non-competing alternative methods provided by comparative analysis.

A communications link between university-based researchers, policy makers and government planners should be a basic part of any growth in comparative higher education. The same argument can, of course, be used in relation to research done on domestic aspects of U. S. higher education. The reasons for this are quite straightforward. As the decade of the fifties began, public spending for higher education was \$2 billion. Today it is \$16 billion. Attendance at private colleges dropped from half to one quarter of total enrollment. Public power and influence has acquired a new significance to education. It could even be argued, for example, that the U. S. system of higher education of the 1970s is more similar to the present-day French system of higher education than to the system found in the United States in the early 1950s. In general, almost any system with which the United States compares itself will provide more insight into the problems arising from higher education-

government relations than consideration of U. S. tradition or educational history alone.

The following sections of this memorandum will suggest a number of areas where it can be demonstrated that foreign experience would be of current interest to U. S. higher education. The selection is based on actual or potential policy concerns. Research into these subjects is likely to be both useful and academically justified because of the following criteria: (1) indication of options to be exercised by decision makers; (2) suggestion of trends to be encouraged or discouraged; and (3) insight into the process by which actions have been initiated and institutionalized.

Access to Higher Education

No comprehensive study of access to higher education has been undertaken since the Bowles⁵ study that was based on data from the 1950s. Since that time numerous new policy orientations have bolstered universal expansion of higher education systems: open admissions in the United States; *numerus clausus* in Germany; comprehensive secondary school tracks aimed at equalizing access across social strata in Sweden, France and Italy. After nearly two decades of constant expansion, most industrial countries began the decade of the 1970s with constant or even decreasing enrollment. There is, to date, no index available that relates the average skill requirement of a modern economy with those of an average worker in the economy. The average worker with an average skill of course does not exist, but this is clearly a researchable question and such comparative indices would be useful to U. S. planners and academics if they facilitate an analysis of: (1) the effects of differing rates of participation of traditional age groups; (2) the effect of

⁵ Frank Bowles, *Access to Higher Education*, Paris: UNESCO and The International Association of Universities, 1963.

the job placement of graduates when the systems become larger mirror images of traditional structures; and (3) the impact of minority participation and women on skill-providing institutions which have traditionally guaranteed access to social preferment. The question of access to higher educational institutions is being posed more and more frequently in terms of lifelong opportunity for individuals rather than attendance limited to traditional age cohorts. A clear appreciation of the conditions which have led most industrialized countries to advocate lifelong access could clarify the relationship between experience gained outside the educational system and its applicability to traditional curricula. The recent study, *Work in America*,⁶ has brought to prominence questions of worker advancement and job redesign. Comparative higher education has much to learn from institutional arrangements that have already dealt with this subject in many different countries.

Adult access questions have led to new legislation designed to facilitate attendance of specific groups, particularly the working population. Thus, the Laws of July 16, 1971 in France should be studied to assess the notion of vocational training as an integral part of lifelong education. Their purpose is to enable workers to adapt to changes in techniques and in conditions of work. A major collective bargaining and political question in the future will be the extent to which it should promote worker advancement and participation in cultural, economic and social development. Other examples are the Industrial Training Act of 1964 in the United Kingdom, as well as legislation in the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark and Canada attempting to

⁶ *Work in America*. Report of a Special Task Force to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Prepared under the auspices of the W. E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1973.

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provide for the initial training and retraining of employed workers as well as for unemployed persons seeking employment.

Several countries in Eastern Europe could also provide useful insights. In Poland, a resolution of the Council of Ministers in 1965 provided for further training on a compulsory basis for certain types of workers, for example, those employed in branches of economic activity where rapid technological change makes it particularly important for them to acquire a wider range of skills and knowledge.

A 1971 law adopted in Romania provides further training for workers at all levels, from senior management staff to production operatives. This training is provided in socialist organizations, government ministries and other public bodies for all sectors of the economy. The law makes it compulsory for all public organizations to provide training for their personnel.

Paid educational leave in the USSR is covered in general terms by an Act of the Supreme Soviet adopted in July 1971. Paid educational leave for managerial, technical, and scientific personnel in the USSR has been regulated by various orders since 1959.

If one is correct in assuming greater emphasis on these questions in the United States, there is surely much to be learned from the experience of other industrial nations which have already attempted to translate objectives promoting labor force access to higher education into institutional forms.

Finally, minority group access has been a major policy consideration of many countries over the last two decades. U. S. planners have much to learn that would be of use in

implementing the ambitious programs already undertaken in the United States. For example, the Indian Government's attempts to provide strong programs of "reverse discrimination" in education and in the employment sector for the "untouchables" have been in effect for nearly twenty years. Recent Chinese experience providing educational advantages for working class and peasant students may also be interesting.

Eastern European countries have also experimented with preferential access arrangements for children of workers and farmers since the 1950s; they present a phenomenon of particular interest to U. S. policy makers. As soon as quota systems fixed by administrative fiat are no longer vigorously enforced because of diminished political pressure, the percentage of working class and peasant children drops. In Poland, this situation has led to a series of administrative adjustments to facilitate or refacilitate access to higher education establishments for these groups. A comparative study which inventories the administrative adjustments that appear to be necessary, and evaluates the proliferation of extra-academic criteria used to obtain policy objectives, should be instructive to the U. S. system which is delicately perched on the threshold of quotas.

Education-Job Link

Access questions which have focused on working populations and policies abroad can be of some use to the U. S. academic and intellectual community. Perhaps more important, however, is the wealth of experience in other industrial countries which have traditionally had a much tighter link between academic training and job-oriented knowledge than in the United States. This is a fascinating line of research because systems which have recently expanded from elite to mass student populations are tending to explore ways of loose-

ning this linkage and find the U. S. model of great interest. The U. S. system, commonly called universal, appears to be searching for ways of tightening the education-job link, as evidenced by recent policy considerations concerning "career education."⁷ Comparative analysis offers many useful examples. A brief summary of some actual programs about which little is known in the United States follows:

- Initial vocational education in schools with close cooperation between unions and industry such as "formation préprofessionnelle" in France and "Berufliche Grundbildung" in West Germany.
- Industrial training organized within industrial enterprises such as the industrial training boards in Great Britain, "Studentenausbildung im Rahmen des dualen Systems" in the Federal Republic of Germany and the "Berufsausbildung" in the Democratic Republic of Germany.
- Integrated occupational and humanistic studies such as the integrated secondary education in Sweden and the "Kollegstufe" in Nordrhein-Westfalen.
- Vocational education as part of general secondary education that reflects both a new vocational orientation and new access and social policies such as "enseignement polytechnique" in France, several programs in Eastern Europe, especially Poland, and recent experiments in Hesse, West Germany.
- Baccalaureate and vocational certificates aimed at providing direct access to the world of work for secondary school leavers, with guarantees of return to higher education at some later date, such as "perito industriale" in Italy, "baccalauréat de technicien" in France, and "technicien A²" in Belgium.

⁷ Martin Trow, "Reflections on the Transition from Mass to Universal Higher Education," in *The Embattled University*, edited by S. Graubard and G. Ballotti, New York: Braziller, 1970.

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- Short-cycle higher education such as sandwich courses and the diploma of higher education in Great Britain; "diplôme d'études universitaires générales" and the "diplôme universitaire de technologie" in France; short-cycle education in the Federal Republic of Germany; and Swedish and Quebecois attempts to integrate short-cycle higher education into a comprehensive educational system.
- Higher education without walls, such as the Open University in Great Britain, or experience credit in Sweden.
- Alternative models of recurrent education such as the U-68 proposals from Sweden, the Laws of July 16, 1971 in France, an Labour's program for adult education in the United Kingdom.

Techniques of Educational Planning

After a decade of heavy reliance on manpower forecasting, a general malaise is evident about the potential of this policy tool and its applicability to higher education. The almost universal use of manpower forecasting provides a rare basis for comparative study across differing social, economic and cultural systems. The almost universal failure of manpower analysis provides a framework for analysis of different systems reacting to the pressures of miscalculation. Of particular interest here is the question of what planners should assume are the important things taught in educational systems that are useful in specific jobs after leaving the systems. Is the curriculum important? What does the recent experience of generalizing the curriculum (in the USSR and Eastern Europe), and thereby placing manpower analysis on a more abstract basis, mean for the United States and its heavy reliance on student choice? Why does the French experience, which relies heavily on expert opinion rather than abstract mathematical modeling, appear to be relatively more success-

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ful than more technocratic approaches to manpower forecasting? Finally, when mistakes in manpower forecasting lead to unemployment or underemployment, where is the burden of adjustment? Do the students adapt to the job market situation (Poland), or do they tend to remain in the educational system rather than confront the world of work (France)? Does a growing educational proletariat become a political force (Sri Lanka)? Do fears of underemployment and accompanying psychic costs arise (United States, United Kingdom), or does the governmental bureaucracy swell by absorbing graduates (India)?

What new approaches are beginning to appear as a response to the failure of planning techniques? Is there some relationship to the planning failure and the movement to recruit students from working situations rather than secondary school systems? Swedish, French, and German approaches to recurrent education suggest that they are, in part, an attempt to import specific job characteristics into the educational system through students rather than providing skills implied by manpower projections that are dependent on a job market more flexible than educational programs. Even in the United States there is a spontaneous movement in this direction. At the State University of New York, for example, an estimated one-third of total enrollment is over 25 years old.⁸ What policies are evident abroad that could encourage or re-orient this trend?

The Professoriate

A common trait among all institutions of higher education is that the faculty resource usually accounts for 70-80 percent of the total resources available to implement the

⁸ Ernest L. Boyer, "Access and Public Support," in *Higher Education: Crisis and Support*, New York: International Council for Educational Development, 1974, p.28.

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objectives of the system. The allocation of faculty time, therefore, is crucial to understanding what the parameters of any reform movement will actually be. Implicit in this, of course, is the notion of faculty autonomy and its traditional conception as an elite liberal profession. A comparative study on the procedures for hiring, recruiting, and promotion of faculty, and the effects of specific country orientations, can provide a useful analysis of how higher education objectives can be achieved.

In spite of its acknowledged importance, there has been very little research on the nature of the professoriate to date. The Carnegie Commission's study of faculty in the United States⁹ is one of the first large-scale inquiries into the opinions, social origins and other characteristics of faculty. Comparative studies could provide some useful insights into the potential role of professors in different cultures.

The direct political role of faculty in Thailand and India and other developing countries might point to some ways in which the U. S. professoriate may become involved at some future time. In France, the fact that professors are civil servants explains somewhat the difficulty in assuring vigorous administrative leadership at the institutional level. It also suggests future problems for the 80-90 percent tenured U. S. statewide systems projected for the next decade.

Part-time faculty are preferred in many of the technically related academic programs in many countries, such as France, Sweden and the Netherlands. Does this, in fact, result in flexible career training provided by their higher educational institutions?

⁹ Seymour M. Lipset and Everett C. Ladd, Jr., *The Divided Professoriate*, reprinted from *Change*, Vol. 3, No. 3, pp. 54-60, May 1971.

The impact of differing tenure arrangements also lends itself to comparative analysis. In the USSR, faculty are required to apply for reappointment every five years; the impact of this policy on the teaching and research activities of the professoriate would provide useful insights into faculty response to incentives. This would be particularly timely as five-year contracts for high-level administrators are evaluated, with the possibility of generalizing this approach to other members of the academic community.

As the quality of teaching in U. S. colleges and universities becomes a matter of concern both to students and professional associations of university professors, experiences in other countries which explicitly confront this question may help to improve American teaching. Some of the programs¹⁰ in various countries which deserve a closer look are the following:

Britain: The University Teaching Methods Unit of the University of London Institute of Education which provides short courses for new lecturers in London's higher educational institutions. The United Kingdom polytechnics run staff development programs for their teachers. Typical courses are composed of modules stressing learning/teaching situations in relation to educational objectives, students, educational technology, assessment in education, further and higher education and new ideas in education.

The Netherlands: All 13 university-level institutions have pedagogical service units, employing nearly 100 professionals.

Federal Republic of Germany: The new Reform Law proposes that each university should have a center of

¹⁰ Edward F. Sheffield, "Approaches (Mostly Elsewhere) to the Improvement of Teaching in Higher Education," in *Improving College and University Teaching*, Vol. 21, No. 1, Winter 1973, pp. 5-9.

didactics attached to the central administration. The law specifies that the centers are to be staffed from disciplines other than by specialists in pedagogy. (The pioneer is Hamburg and its Interdisciplinary Center for Teaching Methods in Higher Education.)

Denmark: The Institute for Studies in Higher Education offers a voluntary year-long course aimed at teaching improvement.

Soviet Union: A 1966 decree of the Supreme Soviet made it obligatory for every teacher in every higher education establishment in the Soviet Union to spend one term in each five-year period improving his or her teaching qualifications.

Sweden: The Office of the Chancellor of the Swedish Universities In-Service Training Division provides for the pedagogical training of university teachers. It consists of a basic course of two weeks for all teaching members in Swedish universities and a supplementary course of six weeks for senior teachers and department directors of studies.

Internal Governance and Management

Universities in many countries have numerous common elements, but also reflect differences in orientation and governance. As some U. S. universities consider alternative structures, or are forced to change due to financial crises, it may be possible to gain some insights from foreign examples of governance and management patterns. For example, the recent German effort at representing all elements of the academic community (including students and non-academic personnel) on governing bodies has been evaluated and even became the subject of a landmark court decision on the rights of the professoriate. Swedish experiments with student management of many of the services of the higher education

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sector, such as housing and counseling, could point to a more effective division of labor within the academic community.

A comparative study of the governability and efficiency of systems of higher education with differing arrangements for handling research would be of interest to U. S. planners. The Soviet research apparatus is almost totally divorced from the teaching institutions and is carried out in specialized networks. The French research effort is coordinated by the Ministry of Education at the Conseil National de Recherche Scientifique which is separate from the universities so it clearly delineates teaching and research functions of professors. The German reforms offer an interesting example of the limits of structural reform if research is to remain within university institutions. Limitations of professorial power were accompanied by mushrooming autonomous research institutes beyond the control of traditional higher educational institutions.

As more and more higher educational systems are providing institutional data on efficiency and productivity, it is becoming feasible for the first time to undertake comparative studies of institutions with differing structural forms and to evaluate their performance on a transnational basis. In an era of extreme pressure on American institutions to increase faculty productivity and institutional effectiveness, a comparative approach to institutional management can perhaps provide some new guidelines for constructive policies. Institutional data is just now becoming available.

University-Government Relations

As both voluntary and mandatory coordinating agencies (especially State 1202 Commissions) proliferate in the United States, it may be relevant to examine the experience of other countries, many of which have a much higher level of direct government involvement. The experiences of specific Uni-

versity Grants Commissions in the Commonwealth countries are perhaps of greatest interest here. In some cases, such as Britain itself, the mechanism seems to be quite successful as a means of regulating university-government interactions. Case studies of government involvement in higher education in Singapore, Burma, and France prior to 1968 may indicate some direct consequences of "overinvolvement" of government coordinating agencies and may provide some needed caveats for U. S. planners.

Finally, studies of mechanisms to insure a measure of academic autonomy in various countries such as France, West Germany and in Eastern Europe, where there is a great deal more direct government involvement in educational institutions than is the case in the United States, could be useful in exploring the effective limits of intervention.

Curriculum

This is an area which has received almost no comparative focus. The experiments in curriculum in various countries can offer Americans some interesting examples of particular detailed innovations. The following are among the developments overseas which might be useful to U. S. higher education:

- The recent IEA comparative study of mathematics achievement (which was focused at the primary-secondary level) might usefully be replicated for particular subjects at the higher education level.
- Experiments with new patterns of general education in Japan and India have had mixed success in recent years. Some of the reasons for this situation might illuminate the continuing American discussion of the liberal arts curriculum.
- New curricula developed for the Open University in Britain in a range of disciplines may be relevant for nonformal higher education in the United States.

There is increasing concern in the United States among academic decision makers as well as students about credentialing and the burden it places on the higher educational system by requiring degrees that are unrelated to criteria of job performance. To date, little research has been done on this phenomenon. A current research effort by the higher education section of OECD in Paris is attempting a first comparative assessment of the impact of credentialing aimed mainly at European systems of higher education that have recently expanded from elite to mass systems. It is not surprising that the experience in the United States is of great interest to them. It is also possible that some recently implemented policies for financing further expansion of higher education activities could indicate ways in which credentialing could be controlled if not reduced. (One such financing scheme is to be found in the French Laws of July 16, 1971 for "education permanente" by which employers are required to subsidize educational activities of workers by a variable tax based on the total wage bill.)

The first "Newman Report"¹¹ offered details of the credentialing process for some 500 licensed occupations in the United States. Depending on the state, different sets of requirements having different prerequisites foster a systemic inefficiency as well as substantial cost to individuals in the highly mobile U. S. society. If the credentialing trend cannot be reversed we might as well make it more efficient, and that is exactly the problem the European Economic Community is coping with at the present time. The Janne Report to the

¹¹ *Report on Higher Education*. U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Washington, D.C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

EEC Commission¹² suggested a fresh approach to deal with the question of equivalency of degrees and diplomas. The process by which European educational authorities reach agreement on academic equivalency of degrees and diplomas as well as the criteria for comparing degrees and diplomas would be of interest to Americans concerned about more realistic requirements for professional and paraprofessional occupations on a nationwide or regional basis.

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This paper attempts to build a case for the relevance of comparative higher education to policy processes and issues to be found in higher education in the United States. While not arguing for a one-to-one fit, it appears clear that Americans do have a great deal to learn from the experience of other countries, which has simply not been available due to the insularity of our debates. The time has come to begin to make available useful data, statistics and interpretations of the experiences of other countries so that the insights provided can become an input into decision making in U. S. higher education.

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¹² *For a Community Policy on Education*, Bulletin of the European Communities, Supplement 10/73, Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 1973. Professor Henri Janne was Chairman of the study.

International Council for Educational Development

The International Council for Educational Development (ICED) is an international non-profit association of persons with a common concern for the future of education and its role in social and economic development.

ICED's three major interests are strategies for educational development; the modernization and management of systems of higher education; and the international programs and responsibilities of higher education. In each area, ICED's purposes are to identify and analyze major educational problems shared by a number of countries, to generate policy recommendations, and to provide consultation, on request, to international and national organizations.

ICED's activities are directed by James A. Perkins, chief executive officer and chairman of an international board. Philip H. Coombs is vice chairman. The headquarters office is in New York City.

The main support for ICED to date has come from the Ford Foundation, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, UNICEF, and the Clark Foundation.

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